

American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*)

Conservation Concern Category:
High Concern

Population Trend (PT)

Stable (Delany and Scott 2002; Sauer et al. 2001)

"BBS routes showed a significant decline 2.4%/yr 1966-1989...Canadian populations have shown no significant trends along BBS routes...birdwatchers reported population declines mid-continent by late 1970s, Atlantic coastal region by 1980, entire continent by 1986...Canadian populations appear secure at present..." (Gibbs et al. 1992)

"an analysis of breeding bird surveys for the north central states suggested decreases in numbers...winter populations in Louisiana may be declining..." (Kushlan and Hafner 2000)

PT FACTOR SCORE=4

"maintain a complex of protected wetlands in different stages of succession for population to grow in the long term..." (Kushlan and Hafner 2000)

TB FACTOR SCORE=5

Threats to Non-breeding Populations (TN)

"northern populations decline after hard winters owing to increased mortality..." (Gibbs et al. 1992)

"the decline and deterioration of wintering habitats, esp. coastal habitats and the Everglades (where we know birds from Minnesota winter from satellite-tagged birds)." (S. Lor and G. Huschle, pers.comm)

TB FACTOR SCORE=5

Population Size (PS)

Global: 2,976,000 total individuals (Delany and Scott 2002; Denver workshop (extrapolated from BBS pairs))

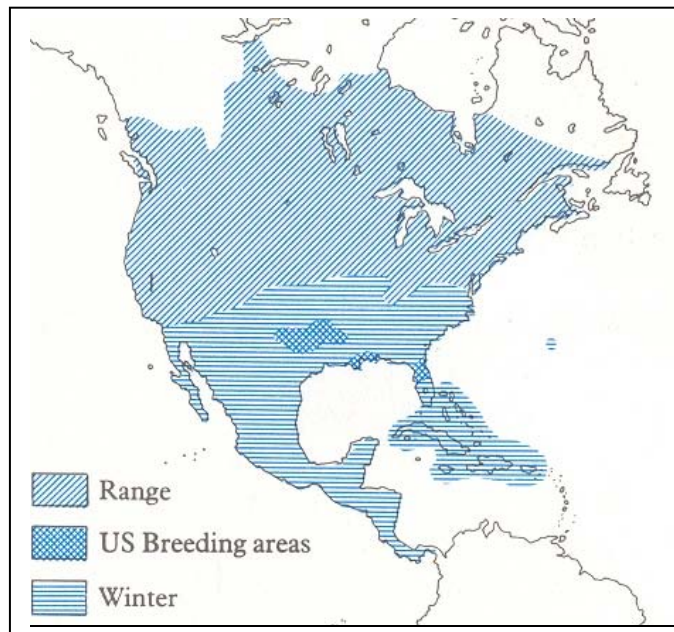
North America: 2,976,000 total individuals (species found only in NA; Delany and Scott 2002)

"densities: 40 calling males/100 ha (Wisconsin), 2.6 calling males/100 ha (Maine)..." (Gibbs et al. 1992)

"widespread in North and Central America..." (Kushlan and Hafner 2000)

PS FACTOR SCORE=2

Global Range (Hancock and Kushlan 1984; entire range within plan area)



Threats to Breeding Populations (TB)

"availability of suitable wetland breeding habitat likely determines gross abundance...population declines attributed to habitat loss, human disturbance, pesticides/contaminants...changes in wetland isolation and stabilized water regimes may seriously erode habitat quality for bitterns...abundance at a given wetland is positively correlated with wetland area...species may be largely dependent on a wetland's area...illegal shooting potentially still affecting populations...recreational boaters may decrease availability of habitat...acid precipitation is a potential threat...agricultural chemicals may have significant effects...marshland invasion by exotic plant species may substantially alter habitats..." (Gibbs et al. 1992)

Breeding Distribution (BD)

Breeding range: S & C Canada, USA (Delany and Scott 2002)

3,472,100 km² (plan area distribution; estimated from range maps)

BD FACTOR SCORE=3

Non-breeding Distribution (ND)

Wintering or core non-breeding range: S USA,
Central America, Caribbean (Delany and Scott 2002)
8,057,400 km² (plan area distribution; estimated
from range maps)

ND FACTOR SCORE=3

Literature Cited:

- Delany, S and Scott, D. 2002. *Waterbird Population Estimates – Third Edition. Wetlands International Global Series No. 12*, Wageningen, The Netherlands. Pp: 50
- Gibbs, J.P., Melvin S. and Reid F.A. 1992. American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*). In *The Birds Of North America*, No.18 (A.Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Birds of North America, Inc., Philadelphia, PA. Pp: 2-9.
- Hancock, J. and J. Kushlan. 1984. *The Herons Handbook*. Harper & Row, NY. Pp: 271
- Kushlan, J.A. and Hafner, H. 2000. *Heron Conservation*. Academic Press: San Diego